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SECRETARY-GENERAL'S BULLETIN

To: Members of the staff

Subject: FIFTH REPORT OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE SECRETARIAT*

1. The purpose of the present bulletin is to inform staff members of the decisions I have taken on the findings and recommendations contained in the fifth report of the Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat. This Committee was established in the context of the action programme that I presented to the General Assembly at its fortieth session (A/C.5/40/30).

2. The Committee considered that, in view of the limited progress achieved, despite the numerous recommendations it had made in previous years and the many General Assembly resolutions on the matter, the adoption of more specific measures for the advancement of women was essential.

3. It thus recommended specific measures in the areas of assignment, promotion and recruitment designed to improve the situation of women, particularly in certain departments and offices with a very low representation of women. Another major area of concern was the situation of women in the secretarial occupation. The Committee also recommended a specific measure in this area.

4. I wish once more to reaffirm my commitment to improving the status of women in our Organization. I am disappointed that the measures previously adopted have so far resulted in only limited progress. Therefore, I welcome the focus of the Committee's fifth report on more specific measures.

5. I have decided to accept the recommendations made by the Committee relating to the assignment, promotion and recruitment of women. These recommendations should be viewed in the context of the new targets established by General Assembly

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* Personnel Manual index No. 1186.

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resolution 45/239 C, namely an overall target of 35 per cent for women in posts subject to geographical distribution by 1995 and a 25 per cent target for women in posts at the D-1 level and above by 1995. Accordingly, the following policy shall apply in the area of assignment and promotion:

> In departments and offices with less than 35 per cent women overall and in those with less than 25 per cent women at levels P-5 and above, vacancies overall and in the latter group, respectively, shall be filled, when there are one or more female candidates whose qualifications match all the requirements for a vacant post, by one of these female candidates.

In the area of recruitment, the same policy shall apply with the following exceptions:

(a) Where the post has been vacant for 18 months and despite the best efforts of all concerned, as certified by the Office of Human Resources Management, it has not been possible to identify or secure a qualified woman candidate during this period;

(b) The post is being filled through a competitive examination.

6. The other specific measure recommended by the Committee is that, without prejudice to the outcome of the ongoing exercise on the restructuring of the secretarial occupation, all staff members of the occupation who, as of 1 October 1990, have been at the G-3 level for at least 5 years or at the G-4 or G-5 levels for at least 10 years should be promoted to the next grade, upon certification of satisfactory service and the potential to perform at the higher level. This recommendation, which is geared to staff members in the secretarial occupation in New York, requires that a study be made as to whether such a measure should apply at duty stations other than New York and, if so, the extent and modalities of application at such duty stations. Because of the large number of staff to whom this measure could apply, a review of the administrative and financial implications is also necessary. I have instructed that such study and review be made within two months. I will then be in a position to take a decision on the implementation of this recommendation.

7. I have also accepted the proposals made by the Committee (a) to strengthen further the monitoring of the status of women by publishing the relevant statistics regularly in the statistical summary issued by the Office of Human Resources Management and (b) for steps to be taken to ensure full application of non-gender-specific nomenclature within the Secretariat.

8. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the Steering Committee as well as those who have worked with them to make this fifth report possible.

Javier PEREZ DE CUELLAR
Secretary-General